

# Theses on the Imaginary Party

Tiqqun

1999

"The moral and political significance of thought only appears in those rare moments of history where "Things fall apart; the center cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world"; where "The best lack all conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate intensity". In these crucial moments, thought ceases to be a marginal affair to political questions. When the whole world lets itself be carried away without thinking by what the many do and believe, those who think find themselves exposed, because their refusal to join with others is patent and becomes thus a sort of action."

-Hannah Arendt, Moral Considerations

1. The Imaginary Party is the particular form that Contradiction assumes in the historic period where Domination imposes itself as dictatorship of visibility and of dictatorship as visibility, in a word as Spectacle. Because there is at first but the negative party of negativity, and because of an inability to liquidate this, the sorcery of the Spectacle consists in rendering invisible the expressions of negation -and this goes as well for the liberty to act as for suffering or pollution- its most remarkable character is precisely to be reputed as nonexistent, or, to be more exact, imaginary. However, it is of this and exclusively of this that one speaks of without stop, because it is that which each day makes a little more visible the failures of the proper functioning of society. But one keeps from pronouncing its name -can one pronounce its name, in any case?- as one fears to invoke the devil. And in this, one does well: in a world so manifestly become an attribute of Spirit, enunciation has a regrettable tendency to become performative. Inversely, the nominal evocation, even here, of the Imaginary Party merits equally well as its act of constitution. Up to the present, that is to say up until its naming, it could not be more than what was the classical proletariat before knowing itself as proletariat: a class of civil society that is not a class of civil society, but which is rather its dissolution. And in effect, it only composes itself to this day of the negative multitude of those who do not have a class, and do not want to have one, of the solitary crowd of those who have re-appropriated their fundamental non-appearance in commodity society under the form of a voluntary non-participation in it. At first, the Imaginary Party presents itself simply as the community of defection, the party of exodus, of fleeing reality and paradoxically as subversion without subject. But this is not its essence just as dawn is not the essence of the day. The richness of its becoming is yet to come and

can not appear except in its living rapport with that which produced it, and which now disclaims it. "Only those who have the vocation and the will to make the future can see the concrete truth of the present" (Lukacs, History & Class Consciousness).

2. The Imaginary Party is the party that tends to become real, incessantly. The spectacle has no other ministry than to hinder, relentlessly, its manifestation as such, that is to say its becoming conscious, that is to say its becoming real; because then it would have to admit the existence of this negativity of which it is, in so much as the positive party of positivity, the perpetual de-negation. It is thus in the essence of the Spectacle to cast the opposing camp as a negligible residue, to make of it a total nothing, and which comes to the same thing, to declare it criminal and inhuman in its entirety, under the pain of having to know itself for a criminal and a monster. At bottom, it's why there are in this society but two parties: the party of those who pretend that there is but one party, and the party of those who know that there are in truth two. Already from this observation, one will know to recognize our party.
3. It is wrong that we reduce war to the brutal shock of the battle, save for reasons that explain themselves without difficulty. Certainly, it would be truly harmful to public order that this be apprehended for what it is really: the supreme eventuality of which the preparation for, and the adjournment of, inwardly work in a continual movement all human groupings, and of which peace is not in the end but a moment. It follows identically for the social war of which the combats can remain at their paroxysm perfectly silent and, so to speak, colorless. One only divines them from a sudden rejuvenation of the dominant aberration. Dispositions taken, one must recognize that battles are exaggeratedly rare, compared to casualties.
4. It is in applying in this type of case the fundamental axiom according to which what is unseen does not exist -esse est percipi- that the Spectacle maintains the exorbitant and planetary illusion of a fragile civil peace, of which the perfection demands that we leave it to spread in all domains its gigantic campaign of the pacification of societies and of the neutralization of their contradictions. But its foreseeable failure is logically inscribed in the simple fact that this campaign of pacification is still a war- certainly the most terrible and destructive that ever was, because it is lead in the name of peace. It is besides one of the most constant traits of the Spectacle that it does not speak of war but in a language where the word "war" does not appear more than a question of "humanitarian operations", "international sanctions", "maintaining order", "safeguarding the rights of man", of the fight against "terrorism", "sects", "extremism", or "pedophilia", and above all this, the "process of peace". The adversary no longer carries the name of enemy, but in revenge they are placed outside the law and outside of humanity for having broken and disturbed the peace; and each war lead to the end of conserving or spreading the positions of economic or strategic force will have to call on a propaganda which transforms it into a crusade or the last war of humanity. The lie upon which the Spectacle reposes demands that is be thus. This non-sense reveals, besides a systematic coherence and a shocking internal logic, that up to now this apparently apolitical and at the same time anti-political system does not help existing configurations of hostilities nor does it provoke new regroupings among friends

and enemies, because it does not know how to escape from the logic of the political. Those who do not understand war do not understand their own times.

5. Since its birth, Commodity Society has never renounced its absolute hatred of the political, and it is in this that resides its greatest vexation as the project of eradicating it is itself still political. It greatly wants to speak of law, economy, culture, philosophy, the environment, and even of politics, but never of the political. Invariably, this negation takes the form of a naturalization, of which the impossibility finds itself denounced in an equally invariable fashion by periodic crises. Classical economy and the century of liberalism that corresponds to it (1815-1914) constituted a first attempt, and a first failure, of this naturalization. The doctrine of utility, the system of needs, the myth of a "natural" auto-regulation of the market, the ideology of the rights of man, and parliamentary democracy are to be numbered as means that were put in place in this time to that end. But it is indisputably in the historic period opened in 1914 that the naturalization of commodity dominance reveals its most radical form: Biopower. In Biopower, the social totality which little by little autonomized itself came to take charge of life itself. On one side, it oversaw the politicization of biology: health, beauty, sexuality, and the available energy of each individual each year reveals more clearly the managerial responsibility of society. On another side, it is a biologization of politics that operates: ecology, the economy, the general repartition of "well-being" and "care", growth, longevity and aging of the population impose themselves as the principal chapters by which one measures the exercise of power. This, of course, is only the appearance of the process, not the process itself. In reality, that which it concerns is to rely upon the false evidence of the body and biological life, the total control of behaviors, of representations and rapports between humans, that is to say, at bottom, to force everyone to consent to the Spectacle out of a supposed instinct of conservation. Because it finds its absolute sovereignty on the zoological unity of the human species and upon the immanent continuum of the production and reproduction of "life", Biopower is this essentially murderous tyranny that exercises itself upon everyone in the name of all and of "nature". All hostility to this society, whether it is that of the criminal, the deviant, or the political enemy, must be liquidated because it goes against the interest of the species, and more particularly the species of the criminal, the deviant, and the political enemy. And it is thusly that each new diktat that restrains a little more already derisory liberties pretends to protect everyone against themselves, in opposing the extravagance of its sovereignty to the ultima ratio of naked life. "Pardon them, they know not what they do" says Biopower as it takes out its syringe. Certainly, naked life -the point of view where human life ceases to be distinct from animal life- has always been the point of view of commodity nihilism considering humans. But it is at present all manifestations of transcendence, of which the political is a shattering form, all intentions of liberty, all expressions of metaphysical essence and of the negativity of humans are treated as a malady that must, for the common happiness, be suppressed. However, the penchant for revolution -an endemic pathology for which a campaign of permanent vaccination has not yet come to pass- certainly explains itself by the unhappy coincidence of an at-risk heredity, excessive hormonal levels and the insufficiency of a certain neuro-mediator. There could not be politics inside of Biopower, but only against Biopower. Because Biopower is the achieved negation of the political, verita-

ble politics must commence by freeing itself from Biopower, that is to say to reveal it as such.

6. In Biopower, it is therefore the physical dimension that escapes from humans, erects itself facing them and oppresses them; and it is precisely in this that Biopower is a moment of the Spectacle, just as the physical is a moment of the metaphysical. It is thus an iron necessity which, from even the smallest detail apparently the most simple, the most immediate - the body- condemns the present contestation to place itself on the metaphysical plane or to be nothing. Therefore neither could it be included, nor similarly perceived in the interior of the Spectacle nor of Biopower, like the rest of all that which throws into relief the Imaginary Party. For the hour, its principal attribute is its factual invisibility in the heart of a mode of commodified unveiling that is assuredly metaphysical, but factually metaphysical singularly in that it is the negation of metaphysics, and first of itself as metaphysical. But, the Spectacle abhors a vacuum, it cannot bring itself to disclaim the massive evidence of these hostilities of a new type which agitate, ever more violently, the social body; it is necessary in other words that it mask this. Thus it comes back to multiple occult forces to invent pseudo-conflicts always more empty, always more fabricated and themselves always more violent, in so much as anti-political. It's upon this heavy equilibrium of terror that rests the apparent calm of all the societies of late capitalism.
7. In this sense, the Imaginary Party is the political party, or more exactly the party of the political, because it is the sole one which can designate in this society the metaphysical labor of an absolute hostility, that is to say the inner existence of a veritable rupture. By that, it takes the path of an absolute politics. The Imaginary Party is the form which politics assumes in the hour of the collapse of Nation-states, of which we know from henceforth to be mortal. It dramatically calls to mind to any State that is not senile, or sufficiently exuberant, the total assertion that the political space is not, in its reality, distinct from physical, social, cultural, etc. space; that in other terms and according to an old formulation, everything is political, or at least is so for power. At this point, politics appears rather as the All of the spaces which liberalism believed it could, predicate by predicate, fragment. The era of Biopower is the moment where domination comes to apply itself to the body, until the individual physiology takes a political character, in spite of the ridiculous alibi of biological naturality. Politics is thus more than ever the total, existential, metaphysical element in which is packed all of human liberty.
8. We witness in these gloomy days the final phase of the decomposition of commodity society, which we agree has lasted only too long. It is at the planetary level that we see diverge in always greater proportions the map of the commodity and the territory of the human. The spectacle puts in place a worldwide chaos, but this "chaos" only manifests itself in the from now on proven inaptitude of the economic vision of the world that has never understood human reality. It has become evident that value no longer measures anything: accounting turns to emptiness. Work itself has no other object than to satisfy the universal need of servitude, and Money has finished by leaving itself to be earned by the nothingness it propagates. At the same time, the totality of old bourgeois institutions, which rest on the abstract principles of equivalence and representation, have entered into a crisis which they seem too fatigued to recover from: Justice no longer manages to judge, Teaching no longer

teaches, Medicine no longer heals, Parliament no longer legislates, Police no longer force respect for the law, nor does the Family even raise children. Certainly, the exterior forms of the ancient edifice remain, but all life has quitted it definitively. It floats in an intemporality always more absurd and always more perceptible. To deceive the world about the mounting disaster, the Spectacle still arrives from one time to another to sport the symbols of parade, but no one comprehends them anymore. Their magic fascinates none but the magicians. Thus, the National Assembly has become a historic monument, which excites nothing more than the stupid curiosity of tourists. The Old World offers to our view a desolate countryside of new ruins and dead carcasses that wait for a demolition that does not come and could yet wait for eternity, if no one had the idea to undertake it. Never has there been the project of so many celebrations, and never, too, did their enthusiasm appear more false, more faint, and more forced. Even the crudest rejoicing no longer takes place without a certain air of sadness. Contrary to appearances, the perishing of the ensemble is not so much organ after organ; it decomposes and corrodes, not, for the rest, in some observable positive phenomenon, but rather in the general indifference that has been unchained; indifference that procures the clear sentiment that no one judges themselves to be concerned by this, nor in any fashion have they decided to remedy it. And as “before the sentiment of collapse of all things, to do nothing but to await patiently and blindly the crashing of the old edifice so full of fissures and attacked in its roots and to leave it destroyed by its crumbling scaffolding is contrary to wisdom as much as to dignity” (Hegel), we see, in certain signs that do not permit the discernment of the mode of spectacular unveiling, preparation for the inevitable exile outside “the old edifice so full of fissures”. Already, masses of silent and solitary humans appear, who choose to live in the interstices of the commodity world and who refuse to participate with what they once had a rapport with. It is not solely that the charms of the commodity leave them stubbornly unenthused, it is moreover that they carry an inexplicable suspicion for all that is linked to the universe that it fashioned and that now is collapsing. At the same time, the ever more patent malfunctionings of the capitalist state, become incapable of any integration with the society upon which it imposes itself, guarantees in its midst the necessary temporary subsistence of spaces of indetermination, zones of autonomy always more vast and always more numerous, where there is sketched an ethos for a whole infra-spectacular world that seems at dusk, but that in truth is at dawn. Some forms of life appear in which the promise goes well beyond the general decomposition. In all respects, this resembles a massive experience of illegality and clandestinity. There are moments where one already lives as if this world no longer existed. During these times, and as a confirmation of this bad omen, we see the despairing tensing and contractions of a world that knows it is to die. One speaks of the reform of the republic when the time of republics has passed. One speaks still of the color of flags, when it is the era of flags themselves that has passed. Such is the grandiose and mortal spectacle that unveils itself to those who dare to consider their time from the point of view of its negation, that is to say from the point of view of the Imaginary Party.

9. The historic period in which we enter must be a time of extreme violence and grand disorders. The permanent and generalized state of exception is the sole fashion in which commodity society can maintain itself as it has accomplished the undermining of the specific conditions possible for installing itself durably in nihilism. Certainly, domination still has

force -physical force as well as symbolic force- but it does not have more than that. At the same time as the discourse of its critique, this society has also lost the discourse of its justification. It finds itself before an abyss, which it discovers is its heart. And it is this truth, noticeable everywhere, that it travesties without stop in embracing in all dialogue “the language of flattery” where “the content of the discourse that the spirit has with itself and upon itself is the perversion of all concepts and of all realities, is the universal trumpery of itself and of others, and the impudence of enunciating this trumpery is for this the highest truth” and where “the simple consciousness of the true and the good... can say nothing to this spirit which does not know them and does not say them”. In these conditions, “if the simple consciousness at last claims the dissolution of this whole world of perversion, it can not all at once demand of the individual to reject this world, because Diogenes himself in his barrel was conditioned by it; besides this demand posed to the singular individual is precisely that which passes for wrong, because wrong consists in worrying about oneself in so much as singular... the demand of this dissolution can only address itself to this same spirit of culture”. One recognizes there the true description of the language that henceforth domination speaks in its most advanced forms, when it has incorporated into its discourse the critique of consumer society, of spectacle and their misery. “Culture Canal+” and “Inrockuptibles” give, in France, passing but significant examples. It’s more generally the scintillating and sophisticated language of the modern cynic, who has definitively identified all usage of liberty as the abstract liberty to accept everything, but in his own manner. In his gregarious solitude, the shrill consciousness of his world prides itself on its perfect powerlessness to change it. It finds itself similarly mobilized in a maniacal fashion against the consciousness of self and against all quest for substantiality. A world such as this “knows all become estranged from it, knows being-for-itself separated from being-in-itself, or that what is aimed at and the goal separate from truth” (Hegel), in other terms that, all in dominating effectively, attaches itself to the luxury of knowing overtly its domination as vain, absurd and illegitimate, calls against it as the only response to what it states the violence of those who, having been mutilated by it of all rights, draw their rights from hostility. One can no longer reign innocently.

10. At this stage domination, which feels its life inexorably escaping, becomes mad and pretends to a tyranny of which it no longer has the means. Biopower and the Spectacle correspond, as complementary moments, to this ultimate radicalization of the commodity aberration that seems its triumph and preludes its loss. In the one and the other case, it is a question of eradicating from reality all that, in it, exceeds its representation. At the end, an unchained caprice attaches itself to this ruined edifice, which tries to tyrannize and weaken without delay all that dares to give itself an independent existence outside of it. We are there. The Society of the Spectacle has become untreatable on this point: it is necessary to participate in the collective crime of its existence, no one must be able to claim to reside outside it. It can no longer tolerate the existence of the colossal party of abstention that is the Imaginary Party. It is necessary to work, that is to say to hold oneself in all readiness at its disposition, to be mobilizable. To reach its ends, it uses in equal measure the most vulgar means, like the menace of hunger, and the most insidious, like the young woman. The faded old tune of “citizenship” which spreads everywhere with regard to everything, and to nothing, expresses the dictatorship of this abstract duty of participation

in a social totality that is in all ways autonomized. It is in this manner, even with the fact of this dictatorship, that the negative party of negativity comes little by little to unify and acquire a positive content. Because the elements of the multitude of the indifferent who mutually ignore one another and who do not think to be of any party, find themselves equally exposed to this unique and centralized dictatorship, the dictatorship of the Spectacle, of which the salariat, the commodity, nihilism and the imperative of visibility are not but partial aspects. It is therefore domination itself that imposes on them, on those who would have been content volunteers of a floating existence, to recognize themselves for what they are: rebels. “The contemporary enemy does not cease to imitate the army of Pharaoh: they hunt down the runaways, the deserters, but never arrive at preceding them or confronting them” (Paolo Virno, *Miracle, virtuosity and *deja-vu**). In the course of this exodus, some unprecedented solidarities constitute themselves, friends and brothers reassemble behind the new lines of the front that they designate, and the formal opposition between the Spectacle and the Imaginary Party becomes concrete. There develops thus, among those who take note of their essential marginality, a strong sentiment of belonging to non-belonging, a sort of community of Exile. The simple sensation of estrangement in this world metamorphosizes in accord with the circumstances into intimacy with estrangement. Flight was nothing more than a fact become a strategy. Now “flight, says the thirty sixth stratagem, is the supreme politics”. But hence, the Imaginary Party is already more than solely imaginary; it commences to know itself as such and marches with slowness towards its realization, which is its ruin. The metaphysical hostility to this society has from now on ceased to be lived on a purely negative mode, like the casual indifference to all that could come upon it, a refusal to play, or the forced failure of domination by rejection of domination. It takes a positive character and by this is so perfectly worrying that power is not wrong, in its paranoia, to see terrorists everywhere. It’s a frigid, cold hatred, like of an inflammation, that for the hour does not express itself overtly or theoretically, but rather by a practical paralysis of all social devices, by a mute and obstinate ill-wishing, and by the sabotage of all innovation, all movement and all intelligence. There are crises nowhere, there is only the omnipresence of the Imaginary Party, of which the centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere, because it operates on the same territory as the Spectacle.

11. Each of the failures of this society must thus be comprehended positively, as the work of the Imaginary Party, as the work of negativity, that is to say the human: in such a war, all who deny one party, subjectively, do but objectively rally to the other. The radicalism of the times imposes its conditions. As long as there is the Spectacle, the notion of the Imaginary Party is that which renders visible the new configuration of hostilities. The Imaginary Party claims the totality of those who in thoughts, words or acts conspire to the destruction of the present order. The disaster is its work.
12. Up until a certain point, the Imaginary Party corresponds to a specter, to an invisible presence, to the fantastical return of the Other in a society where all otherness was suppressed, to a separate accounting for all that was generalized. But this bad dream, this idea of suicide that passes by the head of the Spectacle, can not delay -in respect to the character, itself imaginary, of the present social production- engendering its reality as consciousness becoming practice, as immediately practical consciousness. The Imaginary Party is

the other name of the shameful sickness of shaken power: paranoia, which Canetti too vaguely defined as “the malady of strength”. The despairing and planetary deployment of always more massive and sophisticated techniques to control public space materializes in a piquant fashion the madhouse insanity of wounded domination which still pursues the old dream of the Titans for a universal state; when it is no more than a dwarf among others, and upset with that. In this terminal phase, it speaks only of the fight against terrorism, delinquency, extremism and criminality, because it is constitutionally forbidden to explicitly mention the existence of the Imaginary Party. Besides, this represents for it, in combat, a certain handicap, because it can not designate its fanatics to hate “the veritable enemy that inspires an infinite courage” (Kafka).

13. However it is necessary to know that this paranoia does not lack for reasons, in respect to the direction of historical development. It is a fact that at the point where we have arrived in the process of socialization of society, each individual act of destruction constitutes an act of terrorism, that is to say it objectively aims at the entire society. Thus, at the extreme of suicide that manifests itself in a gesture where death and liberty blend, which delimits, suspends, and annuls the sovereignty of Biopower -and which acquires by that the meaning of a direct derogation of domination- sees itself thus delight a strong force of consummation, of production and reproduction of its world. Similarly, when the law rests on nothing more than its promulgation, that is to say on force and caprice, when this enters a phase of autonomous proliferation, and atop it all, when no ethos is no longer contained in it, then all crime must be comprehended as a total contestation of a solidly ruined social order. All murders are no longer the murder of a particular person- if such a thing as a “particular person” is still possible- but pure murder, without object or subject, without culprit or victim. It is immediately an attempt against the law, which does not exist, but wishes to reign everywhere. From now on, the tiniest infractions have changed their meaning. All crimes are become political crimes, and it is precisely this that domination must at all costs make occult, to veil from all that an epoch has passed, and that political violence, this living corpse, comes to demand the reckoning of all the forms that one does not know it in. It is in this manner, of which the Spectacle could have an intuition, that as the Imaginary Party manifests itself it is escorted by a certain trait of blind terrorism. Certainly, one can interpret this as the moment of the interiorization by all developed commodity societies of the negation that they hold in an cathartic but illusory exteriority of “really existing socialism”, but it is there however its most superficial aspect. It is also permitted for each to diminish the insoluble character by certifying the general rule that “a political unity can not exist under the form of res publica, of the public, which finds itself put into question each time that it creates a space of non-publicity which is an effective disavowal of this publicity”. It is certainly not rare, thus, that certain take the Party as “disappearing in the shadow, but transforming the shadow into a strategic space from whence come the attacks which destroy the place where until now imperium manifested itself, which dismantle the vast background of official public life, that a technocratic intelligence would not know to organize” (Carl Schmitt, Theory of the Partisan). It is a constant temptation, in effect, to conceive the positive existence of the Imaginary Party under the familiar species of the guerrilla, of civil war, of partisan warfare, of a conflict without a precise front or a declaration of hostilities, without armistice or peace treaty. And by these many aspects, it

is verily a question of a war that has nothing behind its acts, its violence, its crimes, and which appear to have no other program, on this point, than to become conscious violence, that is to say conscious of its metaphysical and political character.

14. Because the Spectacle cannot, in virtue of the congenital aberration of its vision of the world no less than from strategic considerations, say anything, see anything, nor understand anything of the Imaginary Party, of which the substance is purely metaphysical, the particular form under which the latter makes irruption into visibility is the form of catastrophe. The catastrophe is that which reveals, but cannot be revealed. By that, one must understand that the catastrophe does not exist save for the Spectacle, of which it is the sudden and unalterable ruin of all its patient labor to make pass as a world that which is only its own *Weltanschauung*; that besides signals by this that it is incapable, like all that is finished, of understanding destruction. In each “catastrophe” it is the mode of commodity unveiling that finds itself unveiled and discontinued. Its character is in evidence as it flies into pieces. The totality of categories, of which it enforces the use, fear an exploding reality. Interest, equivalence, calculus, utility, work, and value are put to flight by the non-assignability of negation. Therefore the Imaginary Party is known in the Spectacle as the party of chaos, crisis, and disaster.
15. In the exact proportion as the catastrophe is truth to the state of fulguration, those of the Imaginary Party work to hasten the advent of this by any means. The axes of communication are for them privileged targets. They know how infrastructures that “are worth billions” can be destroyed in an audacious coup. They know the tactical weakness, the points of least resistance and the moments of vulnerability of the opposing organization. They are besides freer to choose what will be the theatre of their operations and act at the point where the smallest forces can cause the greatest losses. The most troubling, as one interrogates them, is certainly that they know all of this, without however knowing that they know it. Thus, an anonymous worker at a bottling plant pours cyanide “just like that” in a handful of cans, a young man assassinates a tourist in the name of the “purity of the mountain” and signs his crime “Le MESSI”, another “without apparent reason” blew out the brains of his petit-bourgeois father on his birthday, a third opens fire on the wise herd of his school comrades, a last “gratuitously” threw bricks at cars launched on the lively allure of the highway, when he did not burn them in their parking lots. In the Spectacle, the Imaginary Party does not appear as the work of humans, but of strange acts, in the sense understood by the Sabbatean tradition. These acts themselves are not however connected with one another, but systematically held in the enigma of the exception; one would not have the idea to see in these manifestations a unique and similar human negativity, because one does not know what negativity is; at bottom, one does not know any longer what humanity is, nor even if it exists. All this stands out in the register of the absurd, and at this price: there is nothing much that does not stand out. Above all, the Spectacle does not want to see there that so many attacks are directed against it and its ignominy. Ergo, from the spectacular point of view, the point of view of a certain alienation of the state of public explanation, the Imaginary Party is resumed into a confused ensemble of gratuitous and isolated criminal acts of which the authors possess no sense, similar to the periodic irruption in visibility of the always more mysterious forms of terrorism; all things

which finish all the same, in the end, by producing the disagreeable impression that one is shielded from nothing in the Spectacle, that an obscure menace weighs on the empty order of commodity society. Indisputably, the state of exception becomes generalized. No one can any longer pretend, in one camp as in the other, to security. This is good. We know at present that the denouement is close. “Lucid saintliness recognizes in itself the necessity of destruction, the necessity of a tragic issue” (Bataille, *The Guilty*).

16. The effective configuration of hostilities that the notion of the Imaginary Party makes readable is marked essentially by asymmetry. We have no business, presently, with the dispute of two camps that compete for the conquest of the same trophy around which, all things told, they find themselves. Here, the protagonists move on such perfectly strange planes, one from the other, that they do not meet except at very rare points of intersection, and everything accounted for, by the whim of a certain chance. But this strangeness is itself asymmetrical: because, for the Imaginary Party, the Spectacle is without mystery whereas for the Spectacle the Imaginary Party must remain forever a mystery. From this follows a strategic consequence of the first importance: while we can without problem designate our enemy, which is besides by essence designatable, our enemy cannot designate us. There is no uniformity in the Imaginary Party, because uniformity is precisely the central attribute of the Spectacle. Thus it is from now on that all uniformity must feel itself menaced and, with it, all that it represents as currency. In other terms, the Imaginary Party knows nothing but its enemies, not its members, because its enemies are precisely all those who one could know. Those of the Imaginary Party, in re-appropriating their Bloom-being, have re-appropriated the anonymity with which they were constrained. In so doing, they turn against the Spectacle the situation it forced on them and use it as a condition of invincibility. In a certain manner, they will make this society pay for the imprescriptible crime of having stolen from them their name—that is to say the knowledge of their sovereign singularity and by that of all properly human life—to have excluded them from all visibility, all community, all participation, to have thrown them into the indistinction of the crowd, into the nothingness of ordinary life, into the mass in which homo sacer is suspended, and to have walled off from their existence the access of meaning. It is from this condition, in which the Spectacle would like to maintain them, that they depart. It is perfectly insufficient, and at the same time significant of a certain intellectual impotence, to remark that, in this terrorism, innocents receive the chastisement “of being nothing, of being without destiny, to have been dispossessed of their name by a system, itself anonymous, of which they become thus the most pure incarnation. In that they are finished social products of an henceforth globalized abstract sociality.” (Baudrillard). For, each one of these murders without motive and without designated victim, each one of these anonymous sabotages constitutes an act of *Tiqqun*, that executes the sentence that this world has already pronounced against itself. It returns to nothingness that which Spirit has already quitted, to death those who do not live but rather survive, to the ruin of that which has for so long been no more than ruins. And if one must accept for these acts the absurd qualifier of “gratuitous” it is because they do but lead to manifest that which is already true, but still occult, to realizing that which is already real, but not known as such. They add nothing over the course of the disaster, they record and notify.

17. That its enemy has neither face, nor name, nor anything that could be tied to an identity; that this always presents itself, in spite of its colossal designs, under the detritus of a perfect Bloom, voila that which is fit to unleash the paranoia of power. Johann Georg Elser, of which the bomb attempt November 8, 1939 in Munich did not spare Hitler save for a small favor of fate, furnishes the model of that which, in the years to come, will plunge commodity domination into an ever more sensible fright. Elser is the model Bloom, if ever such an expression did not express a crippling contradiction. In him all evokes neutrality and nothingness. His absence from the world was complete, his solitude absolute. His banality was itself banal. The poverty of spirit, the lack of personality and insignificance were his only attributes, but they never became conspicuous. When he recounts his life as a handyman, it is in the manner of an impersonality without bottom. Nothing kindled passion in him. Politics and ideology left him equally indifferent. He neither knew what Communism was, nor what National-Socialism was, and he was however a worker in Germany in the 1930's. And when the "judges" interrogated him on his motives for an act into which he put a year and minute care to prepare, he came only to mention the augmentation of deductions upon the salary of workers. He even declared he did not have the intention to eliminate National-Socialism, but solely a few men that he judged evil. It is such a being that missed saving the planet from a world war and unparalleled suffering. His project rested on nothing but his solitary resolution, which his existence had denied, to ravage that of which he was the inexpressible enemy, that which represented the hegemony of Evil. He took his right only from himself, that is to say from the shattering absolute of his decision. The "Party of Order" will have to face, and already faces, the multiplication of such elementary acts of terrorism that it can not understand nor foresee, because they authorize themselves from nothing but the unshakeable sovereignty of metaphysics, of the crazy possibility of disaster that each human existence carries in itself in infinitesimal doses. Nothing, not even glory, can shelter from such eruptions, which aim at the social in response to the terrorism of the social. Their target is as vast as the world. Thus, all that employs itself in residing in the Spectacle must forevermore live in terror of a menace of destruction, which no one knows whence it emanates, nor what it concerns, and of which one can just barely guess that it wants itself to be an example. In similar actions of brilliance, the lack of discernable goal is necessarily a part of the goal itself, because it is by this that they manifest an exteriority, a strangeness, an irreducibility to the mode of commodity unveiling, because it is in this way that they corrode it. It is a matter of spreading the unease that makes humans metaphysicians and the doubt that cracks, level after level, the dominant interpretation of the world. Thus it is in vain that the Spectacle credits us an immediate goal, if it isn't maybe the hope to provoke a more or less durable breakdown in the whole of the machine. Nothing is more similar to abolishing the totality of the world of administered alienation than one of those miraculous suspensions where all the humanity that the Spectacle habitually eclipses brusquely returns, where the empire of separation is defeated, where the mouths rediscover words which they must, and where humans are reborn in regard to their fellow humans and to the indistinguishable need that they have of one another. Domination sometimes takes many decades to completely recover from a single one of these moments of intense truth. But one gravely mistakes the strategy of the Imaginary Party to reduce it to the pursuit of catastrophe. One does not misunderstand any less in crediting to us the infantilism of wanting to pulverize, in one blow, who knows

which general quarter where power finds itself concentrated. One does not assault a mode of unveiling like a fortress, even if the one can usefully lead to the other. Hence, the Imaginary Party does not aim for a general insurrection against the Spectacle, nor even for its direct and instantaneous destruction. Rather it arranges an ensemble of conditions such that domination succumbs as quickly and as largely as possible to the progressive paralysis to which its paranoia condemns it. Although it does not abandon at any moment its designs to achieve this itself, its tactic is not to attack from the front, but in the same action to hide itself, to orient and to hasten the issuance of the malady. "It is this that is fearful for the holders of power that it does not recognize: not letting itself be seized, being the dissolution of social facts as well as the restive obstinacy to reinvent in itself a sovereignty that the law can not circumscribe" (Blanchot, *The Shameful Community*). Impotent faced with the omnipresence of this danger, domination, which feels itself more and more alone, betrayed and fragile, has no other choice but to extend control and suspicion to the totality of a territory of which, however, free circulation resides the vital principle. It can encircle its "gated communities" with as many guardians as it would like, the ground will continue no less to slip out from under its feet. It is in the essence of the Imaginary Party to everywhere carve up commodity society, even at its foundation of credit. Its dissolving practice knows no other limit than the collapse of what it undermines.

18. It is not so much the content of the crimes of the Imaginary Party that tend to ruin the imperium of bloody peace as their form. Because their form is that of an hostility with no specific object, of a fundamental hatred that wells up, without respect for any obstacle, from a most unreachable interiority, from unaltered depths where humans maintain a veritable contact with themselves. That is why there emanates from them a force that all the chatter of the Spectacle cannot manage to hold back. Japanese children, whom one might justly consider the most intense avant-garde of the Imaginary Party, have forged certain words to designate these absolute fits of rage, where something in them that is not them, indeed, something much greater than them, takes hold. The best-known formula is mukatsuku; at the origin it meant "to have nausea," that is, to be possessed by the most physical of metaphysical sensations. In this special rage there is something sacred.
19. It is however manifest that the Spectacle can no longer content itself, before the massacres, crimes and catastrophes that besiege it, before this inexplicable mass that accumulates, with noting the extension of a gap in its vision of the world. Besides, it expresses without evasion: "one would like that this violence be the fruit of misery, of great poverty. It would be more easy to admit to" (*Evenement du Jeudi*, September 10 1998). As one can observe with a disarming regularity, its first movement is to advance an explanation at all costs, as it must ruin all that upon which it could repose in theory. Thus, when the pathetic Clinton is summoned to give reasons for and to draw the consequences of the Beautiful Gesture of Kipland Kinkel, exemplary Bloom by all accounts, he found nothing responsible save "the influence of the new culture of films and violent videogames". In so doing, he made note of the transparency, of the insubstantiality, and of the radical liquidation of the subject by commodity domination and publicly recognized that the tragic robinsonnade upon which this pretends to found itself, the juridical irreducibility of the individual, is no longer tenable. He ingenuously saps even the principal of commodity society, without which law,

private property, the sale of labor power, and until now what has been called "culture", read all the more like literary fantasy. It would still prefer to sacrifice the whole edifice of its pseudo-justification rather than to penetrate the reasons and nature of its enemy. Because otherwise one must grant to Marx that "the coincidence of the transformation of surroundings and of human activity or of the transformation of man by himself can only be seized and rationally comprehended as revolutionary praxis". Then, for a second time, we return to this confession that it tries at present to efface; it is the painful moment where it exhausts itself in ridiculous epilogues upon the nonexistent psychology of the Bloom that has turned to action. In spite of these interminable considerations, it does not arrive at defending itself from the sentiment in the trial, which is, at bottom, that it itself is judged, and that society takes the place of the accused. It is too evident that the origin of its gesture is nothing subjective, that it is simply a part, in its saintliness, of the objectivity of domination. On this point, it comes all the same to confess, from its very lips, that verily it is a social war that it has business with, without clarifying, however, which social war, that is to say who the protagonists are: "the authors of these mad acts, these new barbarians, are not all head cases. They are most often very ordinary people" (Evenement du Jeudi, 10 September 1998). From now one it is this last rhetoric of an absolute hostility, where it presides over the naming of the enemy who is declared a barbarian and rejected as outside of humanity, which tends to impose itself in a universal fashion. To wit, it is now possible to hear, in the midst of a beautiful period of social peace, such and such a potentate of public transport proclaiming "we are going to reconquer territory". And in fact, we see the spread everywhere, under forms most often painted over, the certitude of the existence of an un-nameable interior enemy, which pursues a continuous action of sabotage; but this time, unhappily, there are no more kulaks to "liquidate as a class". One would be wrong, thus, to not subscribe to the paranoid point of view, which supposes behind the inarticulate multiplicity of protests in the world a singular will armed with black designs: because in a world of paranoiacs, it is the paranoiacs who are right.

20. That the Spectacle fears harboring in its breast an imaginary party, even if in fact the inverse produces itself—in effect, it's rather the Imaginary Party which holds in its aura the Spectacle— this suspicion betrays that while it has qualified these acts of destruction as "gratuitous", it has not said everything. It is glaring that the ensemble of misdeeds that one attributes to "lunatics", "barbarians", "irresponsibles" all contribute in adjacent ways to a unique unformulated project: the liquidation of commodity domination. In the last instance, it is always a question of objectively rendering its life impossible, from propagating unease, doubt and mistrust; to make, in the modest measure of the means of each one, as much harm as possible. Nothing can explain the systematic lack of remorse in criminals, if not the mute sentiment of participating in a grandiose work of devastation. From all evidence, these people, in themselves insignificant, are the agents of a severe, historical and transcendent reason that advertises the destruction of the world—that is to say, the accomplishing of its nothingness. The sole refinement of those conscious fractions of the Imaginary Party is the fact that they do not work towards the end of the world, but the end of a world. This difference could, when the moment comes, leave a sufficient place to the most reasoned hatred. But this is without consequence for the Imaginary Party itself, which must remain the next figure of Spirit.

21. Those of the Imaginary Party fight irregularly. They are engaged in this Spanish war where the spectacular occupier is ruined by stationing troops and material, and where a rampant dialectical paroxysm in the terms of which “the force and the importance of irregularity are determined by the force and the importance that the regular organization puts in place” (Carl Schmitt), and inversely. The Imaginary Party can count upon this constant: that a handful of partisans suffices to immobilize all the “Party of Order”. In this war that the present abandons itself to, there remains nothing of a *jus belli*. Hostility is absolute. The “Party of Order” itself is not reluctant to recall from one time to another: it is necessary to operate as a partisan wherever there are partisans—it suffices to know what prisons have become in the last decade, and how diverse police forces have in the same time taken the habit of proceeding with “marginals”, to comprehend that such a watchword can signify bloody caprice. Thus, as long as commodity domination subsists, those of the Imaginary Party must expect to receive from it consideration as criminals to be dealt with, or as partridges to be shot down, depending on the circumstances. The disproportion of weapons and punishments that it already brandishes against them does not join itself to any conjuncture of political repression, it is consubstantial with what it is, and with what its enemy is. What expresses this is the simple fact that the Imaginary Party contains in its principle the negation of all that upon which commodity domination erects itself, the negation that will manifest itself in action before manifesting itself as discourse. Different from the revolutions of the past, the coming insurrection does not call upon any secular transcendence save the continued disappearance of so many regimes of oppression eager to justify themselves that end up by being hated. At no moment does it pretend to draw its legitimacy from the People, from Opinion, from the Church, the Nation, or the Working Class, even under an attenuated form. It finds its cause on nothing, but this nothingness it knows to be identical to being. That its crimes evidence such a miraculous sovereignty, this proves that it inscribes itself in no particular transcendence, residing dead; rather that it roots itself in Transcendence itself, and that without intermediary. It is by this that it represents for the capitalist State the most considerable peril that it has ever seen facing it. That which hereafter acts as an obstacle does not contest this or that aspect of rights, nor this or that law, it attacks rather that which precedes all laws, the obligation of obedience. Worse still, the partisan of the Imaginary Party develops in the most complete violation of all the existing rules without ever having the sentiment of transgressing them, acting in disdain of them. They do not oppose themselves to rights, they depose them. It aspires to a superior justification to all the written and unwritten laws: the text without a law that it is. It thus renews the absolute scandal of the Sabbatian doctrine, which affirmed that “the accomplishing of the law is its transgression”, and left it behind. It itself constitutes, in so much as it is the living abolition of the ancient law which shares, divides, and separates, a scrap of *Tiqqun*. It responds to the state of exception by the state of exception, and thus returns the whole juridical edifice back to its sad unreality. Finally it represents no one, and not from a lack, but on the contrary by excess, by the refusal of even the principal of representation. Starting from the fundamental irreducibility of all human existence, it proclaims itself as non-susceptible to representation, as the un-representable, but also as the un-representing. Analogous in this to the totality of language, or of the world, it defies all concrete equivalencies. Such an Imaginary Party that renders all monuments to law infamous from its origin as a Roman fiction takes the capitalist State back to the ranks of an association of

criminals only more consequential, more organized and more powerful than others. This presumes nothing of any social disorganization: Chicago in the 1920's was administered in an exemplary fashion. As we see, the Imaginary Party is also fundamentally anti-state and anti-popular. Nothing is more odious to it than the idea of political unity, if not maybe obedience. In the present conditions, it can be nothing other than the non-party of the multitude because, as the contemptible Hobbes remarked aptly, "when the citizens rebel against the State, they are the multitude against the people".

22. If the notion of the Imaginary Party names first of all the negativity in the epoch in suspension, at the same time as the invisibility of this negativity, it is necessary to understand it inseparably from the notion which lets itself dread the positive content of all the practices of which the Spectacle can grasp only the negative, that is to say that which they are not. As it qualifies "the crisis of politics" the massive defection from the vile, established political space, "the crisis of culture" the obstinate indifference that welcomes all the shocking waste that season after season of modern art elaborates, "the crisis of education" the growing refusal of scholarly incarceration, "the economic crisis" as the mute resistance to capitalist modernization and the always spreading refusal to work, "the crisis of the family" the resolute sacking of the unhealthy nuclear family, "the crisis of social ties" that which is nothing other than the rejection of alienated social relations and spectacular mores, it remains blind before this "silent revolution. . . which is not visible by all eyes, that our contemporaries are the least capable to observe, and that is as difficult to paint in words as to conceive". It ignores that "the spirit of the time, growing slowly and quietly ripe for the new form it is to assume, disintegrates one fragment after another of the structure of its previous world. That it is tottering to its fall is indicated only by symptoms here and there. Frivolity and again ennui, which are spreading in the established order of things, the undefined foreboding of something unknown – all these betoken that there is something else approaching. This gradual crumbling to pieces, which did not alter the general look and aspect of the whole, is interrupted by the sunrise, which, in a flash and at a single stroke, brings to view the form and structure of the new world" (Hegel). As it sheds its skin, it is true, the snake remains blind.
23. All the positivity of the Imaginary Party holds itself in the giant blind spot of the unrepresentable of which the Spectacle is atavistically incapable of a sole glimpse; this is because the Imaginary Party is, in all its aspects, only the political consequence of the positivity of which Metaphysical Critique is the concept and the Bloom the representation. When the Bloom, this creature that is not administrated by any social determination other than negativity and of which Hannah Arendt, identifying it a little too quickly with the mass-man, held "isolation and lack of normal social relations" for the principle characteristic, becomes besides the dominant human type of the world, commodity society discovers that it has no more hold on the subjectivities that it has, however, entirely formed and that it, in following its proper course, has thus engendered its fitting negation. In a privileged manner the sphere of sociology shows the failure of products made for domination: the Bloom is everywhere, but sociology does not see it anywhere. Similarly, it would be vain to wait for sociology, as if it could ever give any indication of the effective existence of the Imaginary Party, which the essence is, for it, extraterrestrial. It is there, be it said

in passing, that but one of the aspects of the death of sociology, which has definitively outlasted this socialization of society, which takes away equally well the socialization of sociology. In this trial it loses itself in realizing itself, finds itself ridiculed as separate science by its guinea pigs themselves, who meanwhile have been forced to become their own sociologists. In this manner, since that central, unique, and undifferentiated instance, the Spectacle has taken charge of the continued secretion of all social codes, and the social sciences from Weber to Bourdieu save and share only the weight of their lies. With the death of sociology, it is a total failure of classical social critique founded upon sociology and as sociology that, in collapsing, reveals its perfidious and servile essence. This critique is no longer at the level of the epoch, it is neither apt to describe nor to contest. This task henceforth returns to Metaphysical Criticism.

24. Up to here, one has very badly figured the frontline, which is shared by friends and enemies of the dominant order, to be like a continuous line. To this representation one must hereafter substitute the image of circular and innumerable frontlines, of which each holds in its interior space-time human communities, practices, languages absolutely disobedient to commodity domination, and which the latter, according to its immanent logic, besieges without lapse. All that contributes to maintaining the ancient representation belongs to the camp of the enemy. The first consequence of this new geometry of the struggle concerns the form of the propagation of subversion. We have no more business, in face of a world of authoritarian commodities, with an advance, company after company, in a straight line -of the poor, the workers, or the wretched of the earth- but to a contagion similar to the succession of concentric circles on the surface of a mercury droplet when it is touched. Here, the effect of mass as in the past is identically attained by the intensity of that which is lived at the moment of collapse. It follows that the elementary revolutionary subject is no longer a class, or the individual, but the metaphysical community, whatever be its degree of exile— that's what evidences, by default, the fundamentally insignificant character and unimportance, in the Spectacle, of all personal adventure, of all private history. The good surveyor does not judge it exaggerated to reduce the world in its ensemble to minuscule and dispersed centers, because all that is not them, all that does not give to life a particular and shared existential content is, behind the lifeless charade of appearance, dead. Each one of these metaphysical communities awakens to a harsh world where humans can no longer meet save on the basis of the essential, and constitute, in the midst of the desert, an exclusive pole of substantiality. All knowledge that does not possess its own laws, all simple superficiality is excluded in it. There, conditions create themselves in which the Absolute can recover its temporal pretensions; possibilities that we have lost since the Millenarist uprisings and messianic Jewish movements of the 17th century open themselves. Whatever one says, the acute demand of a new force and language feel themselves become illuminated well beyond the misery of the present. And it is precisely this that the forces of decomposition fear, who promise so many excessive favors to those who will consent to renounce themselves in order to be liked. The Imaginary Party does at first only designate the positive fact of this multitude of zones fully autonomous from commodity domination experiment *hic et nunc*, to the spreading disappearance of the alienated Common, the last convulsions of a social organisms in the process of perishing, and of the proper forms of Publicity. Until now, there had never been federation save for intellectual-

izing. And what binds them is not in effect, in the first case, more than a passive character: these are communities in which the meaning and form of life dominates that of life itself, where the duty to be had been elevated until incandescence. They share thus the same metaphysical substance, but they do not yet know it. It is only under the dark auspices of the common persecution by the global domination of the commodity that condemns them to come to know themselves for what they are: fractions of the Imaginary Party. There is in this process something ineluctable: the resistance of these communities to the generalized accounting expressly designates them to the steamrollers of the reigning abstraction. But in the end the only identifiable effect of this oppression is that these independent universes are led, one by one, and by their enemy no less, to leave the immediacy of their particularity by which they receive, over the course of combat, their universal character. And it is in the same proportion where this enemy is nothing other than a permanent labor of negation of metaphysics that they accede to the consciousness of what unites them: not the affirmation of a metaphysical particularity, but of the metaphysical as such. This tie, all in not being certainly immediate, is nothing formal, nothing constructed, but rather it is something anterior of all liberty, and upon which it is founded: existential hostility, absolute and concrete, to the nihilism of the commodity. It follows from this that the Imaginary Party does not converge towards a general will, contrary to all that was called a “party” in the past, because it already shares the Common, identified here with language, with Spirit, with the metaphysical, or again to a politics of finitude- all these terms become in the circumstances so many pseudonyms of a sole Indescribable. To say that the cohesion of the Imaginary Party is of a metaphysical order does not thus mean to evoke anything other than this everyday war of which each one among us finds themselves always already engaged and which opposes the thorough negation of all aspects of life. On this point, the necessity of its unification imposes itself on all its elements, as identical to its becoming conscious: “The struggle is between the modern world, for one part, and for another part all the other possible worlds.” (Peguy, *Notes conjointes*). All those who, liking truth but certainly not the same truth, agree to ravage the despotism of the derisory metaphysics of the market attach themselves to the Imaginary Party. But the movement in which unity produces itself is also that by which differences pose and solidify themselves. Each specific community in the fight against the empty universality of the commodity knows itself, bit by bit, as specific and raises itself to the consciousness of its specificity, that is to say it diffuses itself by the universal and understands its reflection. It writes itself into the concrete generality of Spirit, from which there progresses, amongst all the celebrated figures, the bacchanal where all irreducibilites are intoxicated. Fragment following fragment, the reappropriation of the Common undertakes itself. In this manner in the heat of combat, the nomadic ballet of communities acquires the complex and architectonic structure of a system of metaphysical castes of which the principle could be none other than play, that is to say the sovereign consciousness of Nothingness. Each metaphysical kingdom slowly learns the frontiers of its territory on the continent of the Infinite. At the same time, a common generality constitutes itself, that contains in it all the different totalities of regional commonalities, that is to say that it is the tracing of their trimming. One can foresee that with the approach of victory those of the Imaginary Party will fight no more battles to defeat an enemy that is at any rate diminished, so much as to at last be able to give free reign to their metaphysical disagreements, that they well intend to exhaust physically and by

play. In this, they are the fierce advocates of violence, but of an agonistic violence, highly ritualized and rich in meaning. As one can see, and it would be wrong to be deceived, the triumph of the Imaginary Party is equally its ruin and disintegration.

25. The form of Publicity that removes and prefigures the Imaginary Party has nothing in common with all that could be elaborated in classical political philosophy. If one had to give it an ancestor, it would be necessary to call to memory that which was fugitively sketched in rare and precious moments of insurrection, in Soviets, in Communes, in the Aragon collectives of 1936-1937, or in the secret schools of the Kabbala, that of Safed, for example. Each time that this last came to force a way onto the ingrate stage of History, the consequences were limitless. Few among those who lived in instants where this one-making break forth in pieces all the amputated and circumscribed forms of Publicity- let itself be glimpsed, were subsequently even to endure the sight of the world as it left those whose eyes had sustained the unequalled aurora of the restitutio in integrum of Tiqqun. But at present by a necessary consequence of evolution, in so much as it progresses in all the developed capitalist societies, one has never known this thing save in the violent fractures that silently install themselves in the calm and for their duration as unperceived, in so much as their forwardness seems to be self-evident. Truly a curious spectacle, that of a world where the dominant forms of existence know they have been, according to the concept, surpassed, and yet persist in existing, as if nothing had happened; meanwhile, on this side the extreme alienation of Publicity imposed by the Spectacle, and as counterweight, we see dawn, yet mingled with the contrary principle, a humanity of which meaning is the exclusive nourishment, although corrupted. Free of the necessity to produce, liberated from the chains of cloistered work, fragile worlds compose themselves for which elective affinitive are all and servitude nothing. The ruins of the metropolis already contain nothing more of living than fluid aggregations of individual humans who, finding no reason for alienation, bypass it in all directions. The slavery of humans in the Spectacle seems no less extravagant to them than their liberty is incomprehensible to the slaves. In the suspension of their existence, the problems of the world cease to be problematic, it has become the material in which they live. Language no longer appears to them as a laborious exteriority that must be internalized to then apply it to the world, it has become the immediate substance of that world. At no moment does their action detach itself as separate from their words. One understands thus that the Spectacle, where politics and economics remain abstractions separated from metaphysics, represents for them a prior form of Publicity. But it is in fact all the old petrified dualisms that, in the substantive continuity of meaning, abolish themselves. In the midst of these rich totalities of meaning, full and overt, eternity finds itself lodged in each instant and the entire universe in each of its details. Their world, the city, shelters them as an interiority, while their interiority has taken on the dimensions of a world. They are already, in a partial, provisional, and sadly reversible manner, in the “restoration of the broken unity of the real and the transcendent” (Lukacs). But for the caprices of domination, their life leads itself to the realization of all human potentialities that it contains. This next figure of Publicity corresponds to the maximum deployment of this, that is to say that it espouses language without the least restraint, that it is the language, just as it knows silence. With it, essence is no longer distinguishable from appearance, but humanity has ceased to confound these with itself. With it, Spirit has its Rest, and attends in peace its

own metamorphoses. Language is there the unique law, new and eternal, that goes beyond all past laws of which it was certainly the material, but in a crystallized state. If the ancient forms of Publicity bring themselves up in more or less equilibrated constructions, more or less harmonious, this one is on the contrary horizontal, labyrinthine, and topological. No representation can surpass it on any point; all its space advertises being explored. As to the operational articulation of the Imaginary Party, in regard to the innervation of the world, this is not assured by any system of vertical delegation, but in a mode of transmission itself inscribed in the limitless horizontality of language: that of the Example. The geographical plane of the world of *Tiqqun* in no way signifies the abolition of values and the end of all human pursuit of exploration. Only, it is by “the authority of the prototype and not the normativity of order” (Virno) that it is permitted to humans, as it already is to fractions of the Imaginary Party, to impose their excellence. The map of the world that we draw is nothing other than the map of Spirit. And it is at present this Publicity of Spirit that, on all sides, overflows the party of nothingness, of which the idiocy and baseness become each day more ferocious and more intolerable. We will put an end to it, inevitably.

26. Without doubt, the war of attrition that the Spectacle leads against the Imaginary Party and freedom henceforth devastates entire regions of the social space. There it decrees measures of protection of which have been common only in world conflicts: curfews, military escorts, methodical information gathering, control of weapons and communications, putting into trusteeship whole sectors of the economy, etc. The humans of our time march straight to an immeasurable fear. Their nightmares are peopled with tortures that no longer belong only to the domain of dreams. Now, one speaks of pirates, of monsters, and of giants. Tied to the progress of a universal sentiment of insecurity, facial expressions bear the evidence of a fatal and continued accumulation of small nervous fatigues. And as each epoch dreams the following, little sultans emerge suddenly and dispute amongst themselves the control of a public space already reduced to the space of circulation. The weakest spirits give themselves over to insane rumors that no one is in a position to confirm or deny. Tenebrous infinities have filled the distance that humans have left amongst one another. Each day make a little more clear, in spite of the growing obscurity, the lugubrious profile of civil war where no one knows who does and does not fight, where confusion is limited by death alone; where nothing is assured, in the end, but worse to come. We thus hold ourselves, on this side of all growth, in the evidence of the disaster, but nothing can restrain our glances going to the beyond. Thus it seems that these are the “birth pangs” which no new epoch has the right to preserve itself from. Those who sharpen their glance to distinguish in the night the nearby combat of giants discover that all this desolation, all these dull echoes of cannon, all these faceless screams are not, in fact, but of the lone, hideous Titan of commodity domination which in its bloody delirium struggles, howls, burns, and tramples; to insure that we want its hide, it hurries off nonsensical orders, rolls on the ground and finishes by hitting with all its weight the walls of its living-room. In the profundity of its folly, it judges that the Imaginary Party is only the obscurity that surrounds it, and that this must be abolished. To hear it, it seems to have had it with this territory of wrongdoing that persists in never coinciding with the map, and already it menaces it with the worst reprisals. But in proportion as the day exhausts it, no one listens anymore, its closest sub-

jects themselves lend no more than an absent-minded ear to this capering old lunatic. They act as if to listen, and then they wink at one another.

27. The Imaginary Party awaits nothing from the present society and its evolution, because it is already practically, that is to say the existence in fact, of its dissolution and transcendence. Consequently, it is not a question for it of taking power, but solely of making domination fail everywhere, by durably making it impossible for its apparatus to function—the temporary character, and even the fugitive places, of the contestation that operates under the banner of the Imaginary Party explain themselves by this: it is guaranteed to never become a power itself. This is why the violence it has recourse to is of a totally different nature than that of the Spectacle, and this is also why it fights alone in obscurity. While commodity domination unleashes its “empty liberty”, its “negative will which has no feeling of existence save in destruction”(Hegel), so long as its pointless violence aspires to nothing but the infinite extension of nothingness, the exercise of violence by the Imaginary Party, although unlimited, only attaches itself to the preservation of forms of life that power prepares to alter, or already menaces. From thence comes its force and its incomparable aura, from thence also comes its richness and its absolute legitimacy. Even in the midst of the offensive, it is a violence of conservation. We rediscover here the dissymmetry of which we have spoken. The Imaginary Party does not pursue the same end as domination, and if they are concurrent, it is that each one among them wants to destroy that which the other attempts to realize; with this difference however, that the Spectacle does not want more than that. That the Imaginary Party should come to the end of commodity society and that this victory should be irreversible will depend on its faculty of giving intensity, greatness and substance to a life free of all domination, no less than the aptitude of its conscious fractions to make this explicit in their practice as much as in their theory. It is to be feared that domination would yet prefer to the eventuality of its defeat a generalized suicide where it will be at least assured of bringing with it its adversary. From one end to the other, it is a bet that we make. It belongs to history to judge if what we undertake is but a beginning or already an end. The Absolute is in history.

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)

Anti-Copyright



Tiqqun

Theses on the Imaginary Party

1999

Tiqqun 1

**[usa.anarchistlibraries.net](http://usa.anarchistlibraries.net)**